

Mounts Ryde
Golf Club Road
Hook Heath
Woking
GU22 0LS

28 July 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: Woking 2027 DPD Consultation and in particular to site references:

GB10 (Land to the north east of Saunders Lane, between Saunders Lane and Hook Hill Lane, Mayford GU22 0NN)

GB11 (Land to the north west of Saunders Lane, Mayford, GU22 0NN)

GB14 (Land adjacent to Hook Hill Lane, Hook Heath, GU22 0PS)

I am writing to register my objection to the removal of areas GB10, GB11 and GB14 from the Green Belt and to proposals to build houses on parcels GB10 and GB11 post 2027.

My reasons for objecting are set out below.

1. No exceptional circumstances demonstrated for 1200 houses or removal of GB14

My understanding is that national planning policy allows the release of land from the Green Belt only in exceptional circumstances. The Woking Core Strategy requires Woking Borough Council ("WBC") to find sites in the Green Belt for 550 homes in the period 2022-2027. WBC appears to have significantly exceeded what is required of it in identifying sites for an additional 1200 homes in the period 2027-2040. While it may be sensible to look further ahead than the current core strategy, the exceptional circumstances rule still applies.

WBC has not demonstrated any exceptional need for 1200 houses, nor indeed any other number, in the Green Belt around Woking post 2027. I understand that no evidence has been produced to demonstrate that WBC has exhausted Brownfield sites for development in its Plan. Furthermore, WBC openly states that it considers land available for development (for example owned by the Council or a Developer) as more "viable" for removal from the Green Belt. The ownership status of land has no bearing on whether it should be Green Belt. There is still a need to clearly identify the exceptional circumstances which lead to that decision, notwithstanding that it may be practically more simple to procure.

Furthermore, the removal of GB14 from the green belt to create 'green infrastructure' is not necessary since no change of use is planned. It is in any case 'not an exceptional circumstance' which is required for land to be removed from the green belt.

2. Urban sprawl will be increased

The purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl and to maintain the open spaces between individual towns and villages. The current proposals to build on the open

land that separates Hook Heath from Mayford and Mayford from Woking do just the opposite. This is important to all residents of Woking, not simply those of us who are residents in Hook Heath.

I was brought up in Woking and my parents still live in Goldsworth Park. It is one of the key attractions of the town that, despite the density of living, there are still areas of countryside available to enjoy within walking distance of places like Goldsworth Park.

3. No notice taken of WBC's own strategy.

I understand that Woking Core Strategy policy CS24 requires that all development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character, and local distinctiveness and will have regard to landscape character areas. Specifically,

To protect local landscape and townscape character, development will be expected to:

• conserve, and where possible enhance existing character, especially key landscapes such as heathlands, escarpments and the canal/river network and settlement characteristics; maintain locally valued features, and enhance or restore deteriorating features.

This proposal takes no notice of this requirement. The key landscapes are not being preserved, but destroyed. Furthermore the proposed development will in no way enhance the existing character, it is totally out of character.

4. Flaws in the Green Belt Review

The main justification for the decisions is the green belt review on which there was no consultation. There are some very major flaws in this review not least:

- These sites were recommended on the basis of their proximity to a "Local Centre". However, other than a nearby Post Office and barbers, there is no supporting infrastructure in the form of shops, doctors, dentists, medical facilities, or schools. Residents living in these major developments will be isolated unless they have a vehicle.
- It claimed these sites were 'sustainable' on the basis of Google travel times – taken outside the rush hour and hence hopelessly optimistic. Traffic is already very heavy during rush hour and school collection time and that is without factoring in the increased traffic from 1200 houses.

5. The density of housing is not compatible with the surroundings

The proposed housing densities of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) on the Saunders Lane sites GB10 and GB11 are grossly excessive when compared to the average density of 5.5 dph in Hook Heath, and even less in the Fishers Hill Conservation Area.

Yours faithfully

Kate Alexander